

# THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



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Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization*

March is the month we traditionally recognize the contributions that women and women-owned businesses make to the Department of Transportation (DOT). This year we are highlighting five women-owned businesses that are successfully contributing to the transportation sector. I think you will find their stories inspirational.

These women represent a diverse range of skills, experiences, and backgrounds – as do all of the women who work directly or indirectly with DOT. I am proud of the initiatives that DOT has undertaken to encourage and assist women-owned businesses to participate in DOT, and DOT-assisted, contracts and grants. These women have so much to contribute.

On March 23, OSDBU is conducting a Transportation Symposium in Las Vegas, Nevada. I hope that those of you who are interested in conducting business in this region will be able to attend.

This month, DOT posted the U.S. Department of Transportation Draft Strategic Plan FY 2000-2005 for review and comment at <http://stratplan.dot.gov/>. I encourage you to read this very important document and provide feedback. The Strategic Plan outlines the goals and direction that DOT will undertake to achieve its mission over the next five years. We value your input and support.

## The Transportation Community Welcomes Women-Owned Businesses

The President's FY 2001 budget proposes a record \$54.9 billion investment in transportation. This represents a wide range of opportunities for small, women-owned and disadvantaged firms to conduct business in the transportation sector.

The number of women-owned firms in the United States has more than doubled between 1987 and 1999. Significantly, the largest increase in women-owned business numbers during the period 1992 to 1999 occurred in such industries as transportation, communication, construction, agriculture, manufacturing and wholesale trade.

While about 40 percent of all businesses in America today are owned by women, and women start businesses at twice the rate of all business start-ups...women owners still must overcome significant challenges in order to reach full success. For example, access to capital, whether for debt or equity financing, is often limited since many women owned businesses are too small to meet most venture capital fund standards. Sixty (60) percent of women owned small business start-ups are in the home.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has made a firm commitment to promote contract opportunities for women-owned businesses, by providing targeted outreach and advocacy efforts to encourage and support women-owned and all small businesses.

Featured in this article are the success stories of five women-owned businesses that work in the transportation sector. They describe the personal experiences of these 5 individual women, but they are also representative of all the women-owned firms that the U.S. Department of Transportation is proud to be associated with.

### Angelia Arrington and MultiConsultant Associates, Inc. (MCA)

Angelia Arrington, founder of MultiConsultant Associates, Inc. (MCA), grew her business at a very steady, yet determined, rate from 1991 to the present. In November 1991, this single mother started her conference and training services business in a corner of her living room while she continued working full-time. By late 1995, her business occupied a small bedroom in her home. In 1996, she hired an assistant, expanded into her basement, and attained 8(a) certification. In 1997, she hired 4 more employees. By mid 1998, she acquired a second business, more office space, increased capability for technological support and database development, and hired 22 more employees.

Today, MCA's 30 employees offer diversified professional services in the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area to commercial, as well as government, clients. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) presented Ms. Arrington with DOT's



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Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Award recognizing her as their 1999 Outstanding Women-Owned Business Enterprise.

MCA recently played an instrumental role in organizing the White House Community Empowerment Board Procurement Opportunity Fair.

From its beginnings, as a provider of conference and training services, MCA has been molded by Ms. Arrington to specialize in information management through the creative use of state of the art technology. Her ambition is to go international with her company. Ms. Arrington anticipates that MCA will earn \$15 million in gross revenues and employ approximately 150 people within the next five years.

Ms. Arrington expects by the time MCA graduates from the 8(a) program in 2003, she will have established an office in Durban, South Africa, based on international contacts resulting from her 1997 participation in a federal trade mission promoting women owned enterprises.

*For more information on MultiConsultants Associates, phone 301-565-4020, fax 301-565-5112, or view their website at <http://www.multiconsultant.com>*

## Regina Morgan Smith and Trans-Tel Central, Inc.

Trans-Tel central, owned by Regina Morgan Smith, originated in 1974 as a proverbial "mom and pop" small business in Norman, Oklahoma. Today this firm owes its success to the vision and drive of Regina Morgan Smith, member of the Cherokee Tribe of Oklahoma.

In the 1980's, Ms. Smith's parents ran this telephone contracting business and did all of their business with AT&T. With the divestiture of AT&T and the Bell companies, her family suddenly found that their past customer was now a competitor.

The challenge Trans-Tel faced was



obtaining recognition and credibility in a very competitive market. Ms. Morgan Smith, who became majority owner of the company in 1989, states that Trans-Tel Central made a conscious effort to analyze what would make it competitive in this rapidly changing environment and they followed through.

In 1991, Trans-Tel received their 8(a) certification and got on the GSA Federal Supply Schedule. Their first federal government work started with a sub-contract to install fiber optics at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City. Currently, Trans-Tel Central provides silicon graphics programmers and other experts to work on the flight simulation program at the DOT/FAA Mike Monroney Center in Oklahoma.

Within the transportation sector, Trans-Tel provides hardware and software information technology support to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The company also specializes in system integration of voice and data networking, including fiber optic technology, broad band LAN networks and telecommunication installations.

Trans-Tel Central made a commitment early on to set itself apart from its competition by focusing on high value, high quality market niche. The company prides itself in "going for the educated customer who understands the value of quality rather than just looking for the lowest price." Ms. Morgan Smith emphasizes that her company can provide best value and quality and still maintain competitive prices.

Due to its hard-won nation-wide reputation for excellence in high speed voice and data cable systems expertise, Trans-Tel enjoys excellent word-of-mouth new business opportunities and has a solid customer base that returns for upgrades every eighteen months to three years.

Trans-Tel Central graduates from the 8(a) program in 2001 and Regina Morgan Smith expects the company to double over the next 5 years. From working for one customer in Oklahoma, the company's field offices in several states now serve a mix of 70 percent federal and 30 percent commercial clients.

*For more information on Trans-Tel Central, Inc., phone 405-447-5025, fax 405-447-5029, or view their web site at <http://www.trans-tel.com>.*

## Lynn C. Chen and EARL Security, Inc.

Lynn C. Chen is the founder of Earl Security, a California company that supplies a full range of design, sales, installation and maintenance for intruder detection, fire alarms, intercoms, and closed circuit surveillance. Incorporated in 1988, the company holds 3 State licenses in low voltage and general electrical contracting, and as an alarm company. Ms. Chen emphasizes that in her line of work, it is important to be diversified and to be prepared to offer whatever services the customer needs.

Ms. Chen concedes that it has not been easy to be a small firm in a highly competitive market. She



noted that it would be easy for many new business owners to become discouraged. However, she counsels small start-up businesses to work harder, be persistent, have courage and take full advantage of the government programs.

One program that helped Ms. Chen is the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Short Term Lending Program. "The supporting programs do work," she says.

EARL Security, Inc. has established a line of credit with Cathay Bank, one of the DOT STLP partners. This line of credit has provide more flexibility for expansion and allowed the company to compete for larger contracts. Ms. Chen believes that "with quality products and technical skill, we make a safer place to live and work." This boosts employee morale, reduces business costs through curtailing theft and increases production.

*For more information on Earl Security, Inc., phone 626-285-9178, fax: 626-285-3223, e-mail: earltech@yahoo.com, or view their web site at [www.earl-security.com](http://www.earl-security.com).*

## **Sofia Rovira and Surveyors and Mappers of America**

Sofia Rovira, a successful engineer in her own right, founded Surveyors and Mappers of America (SAMA), in 1996. The existing company she was working for did not have enough work to keep its surveying department in business. Rather than see the employees out of work, Ms. Rovira started her own surveying and mapping Company. SAMA now employs 13 people and has the Florida State Department of Transportation for its largest client.

SAMA utilized its minority business status under the DBE program to make successful bids on major state and federal contracts and to get a toehold in a work environment that otherwise might not have been as readily accessible to a small, start-up, technical organization.

Standard project construction contracts often provide that subcontractors (such as surveyors) are not paid until the primary contractors on a highway or road project are paid. Because survey work precedes actual construction by weeks or months...even years, cash flow can become a critical issue. Ms. Rovira took advantage of the Department of Transportation's Short Term Lending Program to assist her with these cash flow issues and was approved for a revolving line of credit with Hamilton National Bank in Miami, FL.

Ms. Rovira, who has other successful entrepreneurial interests as well, hopes to double the size of SAMA in the next three years.

*For more information on Surveyors and Mappers of America phone 813-879-5504, fax 813-879-5603, or e-mail at [Samasurvey@aol.com](mailto:Samasurvey@aol.com)*

## **Wanda J. Petty and JP Corporation**

Beginning at the age of 16, Wanda J. Petty remembers working summers for RCA assembling parts for submarine radios in World War II. Her father and her husband were tool and die makers for RCA in Indiana. In 1964 Mrs. Petty, her husband, and eventually her children, started a business in their basement doing special parts work for Bell Labs and Western Electric. They engraved the buttons for the first touch-tone phones.



JP Corporation, which came into being in 1978, is known for custom, precision machining. Although serving a variety of clients, JP Corporation is currently a principal supplier for Amtrak for special, small or obsolete parts and as a source for "reverse engineering" for certain train car components. Located close to the Amtrak major overhaul and maintenance yards in Beech Grove, Indiana, JP Corporation works closely with Amtrak, and also with CALTRAN, Alaskan Railroad, Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, Maryland Transit Administration and the Oklahoma City-Fort Worth Corridor to supply special service and refurbishment needs.

Because of their precision, product quality, quality of service, timely delivery and competitive pricing, JP Corporation and Wanda J. Petty were selected as the Federal Railroad Administration's Woman Owned Business Enterprise of 1999.

Mrs. Petty says that her personal and her company's goals are the same: to work hard and concentrate on pleasing the customers. The JP Corporation has a "can do" focus on customer service and pays strict attention to detail and results, based upon what Mrs. Petty feels is an old-fashioned, but never out-of-date, emphasis on giving the client what they need. Mrs. Petty hopes to continue to grow JP Corporation, but to do so in a

way that avoids undue acquisition of debt and is in keeping with its tradition of concentration on excellence.

*For more information on JP Corporation, phone 317-783-1000, or fax 317-783-1015.*

## **Conclusion**

The DOT Strategic Plan FY 2000-2005 identifies as a principal goal the reduction of barriers to transportation-related trade. The Plan announces a strategy of encouraging increased private sector investment in transportation, including the participation of small, woman owned and disadvantaged businesses in DOT and DOT assisted contracts and grants.

The DOT is committed to expanding opportunities for women in transportation. These five success stories demonstrate that by working together, we can make the nation's 21st century transportation system international in reach, intermodal in form, intelligent in character and inclusive in nature. DOT welcomes the involvement of women-owned business to help shape the transportation system of the 21st century.

## **Nevada Transportation Symposium**

The U.S. DOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) is offering a Transportation Symposium on March 23, 2000 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Meet one-on-one with the federal, state and local DOT procurement officials, representatives from other government agencies and prime contractors. Learn about upcoming purchasing, contracting and subcontracting opportunities. For more information, contact Carla Coolman by phone at 1-800-532-1169 ext. 9886 or by e-mail at [carla.coolman@ost.dot.gov](mailto:carla.coolman@ost.dot.gov). You can register online at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/register.cfm>.

## Competitive Assistance Program for Minority Institutions of Higher Education

The Federal Highway Administration is pleased to announce its new Competitive Assistance Program for Minority Institutions of Higher Education (MIHE) including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

In FY 2000, FHWA has approximately 20 different projects that all relate to one or more of five (5) strategic goals: Mobility, Safety, Productivity, Human and Natural Environment and National Security.

Any HBCU and/or MIHE will be eligible to compete for one or more of these projects. To receive a copy of the announcement please register at the following web site: <http://eps.gov>. Choose vendor and then register to receive all the information from the Department of Transportation. As a registered vendor, you will be notified via e-mail message.

The FHWA anticipates releasing the Request for Applications in late March, providing a response time of 45 days with awards anticipated by July/August 2000. Should you have any questions, please call Debbie Ridgely on 202-366-4233 or send an e-mail to: [debbie.ridgely@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:debbie.ridgely@fhwa.dot.gov).

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR March/April 2000

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>
March 23	OSDBU Transportation Symposium Las Vegas, NV	<a href="http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/register.cfm">osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/register.cfm</a> 1-800-532-1169 x69886 <a href="mailto:carla.coolman@ost.dot.gov">carla.coolman@ost.dot.gov</a>
March 29	NBBC/BBA Trade Mission to DC	Angela Dilver-Dendy 1-800-525-1169 x61902 <a href="mailto:angela.dilver-dendy@ost.dot.gov">angela.dilver-dendy@ost.dot.gov</a>
April 11	10th Annual OSDBU Procurement Conference 2000 Upper Malboro, MD	Bob Jefers (301) 206-2940 <a href="http://www.treas.gov/sba/osdbu">www.treas.gov/sba/osdbu</a>
May 1-4	ITS 2000 Annual Meeting of the ITS America	<a href="http://www.itsa.org/its2000/registration.nsf">www.itsa.org/its2000/registration.nsf</a> Katrina Mayo (202) 484-4549 <a href="mailto:kmayo@itsa.org">kmayo@itsa.org</a>
May 15-16	Florida Black Business Investment Board Annual Investment Days Conference Tallahassee, FL	Barbara Lettman 850-487-4850
Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday	One-On-One Informational Session Designed to Answer Questions on Gaining Grants/ Contacts through the SBIR and STTR programs. Washington, D.C. Sponsored by SBA	Darrell Williams (202) 887-6709

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